

Applicant : David M. Cobb
Appl. No. : 09/845,046
Examiner : Lena Najarian
Docket No. : 706737.48

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 6, line 1 through page 8, line 4 with the following amended paragraphs:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a preferred embodiment of an immunization-tracking network including immunization product manufacturers 100A, 100B ~~101A, 101B~~, immunization providers 101A, 101B, 101C, and immunization-tracking authority 102. For simplicity, the following system and method descriptions are written for immunization product manufacturer 100A, and immunization provider 101A, although the system, e.g., hardware and software, and methodology applies to the other manufacturers and providers in a similar manner.

A machine-readable communications device 103A, such as a bar code sticker, may be attached to an immunization product, e.g., the immunization product packaging 105A, 105B at step 106A at immunization product manufacturer location for the tracking authority 102 ~~10A~~. The immunization product packaging 105A, 105B may be packaging for individual immunization-containing products or components, such as vials or syringes, or the immunization product packaging may be cartons, boxes or connected strips of immunization-containing components. Preferably, the communications device is attached to the product such that the device may not be separated from the product before administration to a patient, e.g., by attaching the device to an individual dosage container or a delivery system, such as a syringe, syringe safety system, or other injection device. More preferably, a read/write machine-readable communications device is used, such as a magnetic

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strip, a “smart” chip including a microprocessor, and the like.

In a preferred embodiment, the product data encoded onto the communications device 103A, 103B includes: product identification, such as generic or chemical name of the product; manufacturer identification; product lot number; and/or product expiration date. In addition or alternatively, the communications device may have sufficient non-volatile memory such that the immunization product data encoded on the device also includes product manufacturing date, dose size, administration requirements and instructions, and/or product warnings, such as possible allergic responses.

Preferably, a manufacturer’s computer 107A, 107B or other electronic device may be used to input or download the immunization product data to the communications device. For example, an upload/download device, e.g., an electronic reader/writer, may be used initially to download product data to a microchip or a magnetic strip, and/or to read and supplement or replace the product data. Alternatively, if a bar code sticker 103A, 103B is used, a bar code sticker printer may be used to generate an initial bar code sticker 103A, 103B, and/or to read an existing bar code sticker and print a new one with new or supplemented data. The manufacturer’s computer 107A, 107B may maintain a file in its memory of all or part of the immunization product data encoded on the bar code sticker 103A, 103B.

The immunization product, e.g., packaging 105A, 105B, including the machine-readable bar-code sticker 103A, 103B may be shipped to immunization

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provider 101A, 101B, 101C in step 111A, 111B for immunizing one or more individuals 113A, 113B, 113C. After receipt and, preferable at the time of immunization or administration, the immunization product data on bar code sticker 103A, 103B of immunization product packaging 105A, 105B is read or uploaded, e.g., by bar code reader 115A, 115B, 115C to the provider's computer 117A, 117B, 117C in steps 119A, 119B, 119C.

Individual immunization data on the individual 113A, 113B, 113C receiving the immunization or other medical product may also be entered into the provider's computer 117A, 117B, 117C in steps 121A, 121B, 121C at approximately the time of administration. The individual immunization data may include at least one data entry relating to the individual being immunized. In a preferred embodiment, the information includes demographic data related to the individual 113A, 113B, 113C such as age, sex, race, geographic location, and the like. In addition or alternatively, the individual immunization data may include information traceable to the specific individual and may include the individual's name, social security number, medical insurance number, and/or other data traceable to the individual. In a preferred embodiment, the individual immunization data also includes the time and date of administration, and/or additional medical, insurance, or other information useful in tracking and/or analyzing immunizations.